

About the Scottish Entanglement Alliance (SEA)

Here in Scotland our rich inshore waters provide world-class fishing grounds for creel fishermen. Recognised as a very sustainable low impact fishery, the static inshore fishing fleet not only makes a significant contribution to the national economy, it also forms the backbone of many small communities. These waters are also home to a diverse array of large marine animals including whales, dolphins and porpoise (collectively known as cetaceans), basking sharks, seals and turtles. Unfortunately these animals sometimes become entangled in fishing gear, and the consequences of these interactions can have conservation, welfare, safety and economic implications. Entanglements can impair an animal's ability to breath, feed, swim and reproduce, and these incidents can be both distressing for those encountering them and potentially dangerous where live animals are involved. The financial cost to fishermen through damaged gear and lost fishing time can also be significant.

Launched in June 2018, the Scottish Entanglement Alliance (SEA) is a partnership between six organisations dedicated to promoting and protecting Scotland's wildlife, heritage and sustainable marine industries. Initiated by organisations operating within the inshore fishing industry SEA will work closely with creel fishermen to provide a co-ordinated, comprehensive monitoring and engagement programme to better understand the scale and impact of marine animal entanglements in our waters. The aims of this project include to provide a platform for fishermen to suggest and discuss ideas to help reduce the risk of entanglement, to provide opportunities and support for fishermen to become more involved and take the lead in entanglement research and disentanglement efforts, and to better understand the socio-economic impact of marine animal entanglements on the Scottish inshore fishing fleet.

To achieve these goals fishermen are being asked to participate in short (10-15 minute) informal interviews with the SEA project co-ordinator Ellie MacLennan, who will be visiting piers and harbours around the coast over the next 12 months. These interviews will be based around an anonymous questionnaire which aims to capture fishermen's knowledge and experience of entanglements. Following these interviews small training courses and knowledge exchange workshops will also be hosted locally around the coast if there is sufficient interest. Ellie has already completed nearly 70 interviews and the unique information, ideas and concerns creel fishermen have shared so far has been invaluable and very gratefully received.

Get involved

Entanglement in fishing gear is a global problem that poses a threat to marine animals and fishers wherever the two overlap. Minimising the occurrence and negative impacts of these incidents to both fishermen and marine animals from a safety, welfare and economic perspective is the goal of this research, and central to this will be engaging with local fishermen to ensure they are represented and benefit as much as possible from this work. If you are a creel fisherman and would be willing to meet with Ellie and contribute to this work, share your own experiences of entanglement, or would like to learn more about SEA, please contact her on:

01463 246048

07393 798153

entanglement@sac.co.uk

Or visit www.scottishentanglement.org

Those who both have and have not experienced an entanglement are invited to participate to ensure that this work is as representative of the industry as possible. The project partners realise that marine animals entanglement is a sensitive issue and guarantee that any information shared will be treated sensitively, positively and anonymously.